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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 000206

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/28/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [NL](#) [CU](#) [EZ](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/CUBA/EU: STILL A CHANCE TO RESIST  
CHANGE IN EU POLICY

REF: TRAUB/DODMAN EMAIL OF 1/28

Classified By: Political Counselor Andrew Schofer for reasons 1.4 (b) a  
nd (d).

¶1. (C) Dutch interlocutors informed Poloff on January 27 that the Czech Republic continues to pose obstacles to implementing the COLAT's proposed revisions to the EU's strict "June measures" against the Cuban regime. If the Czechs remain firm, this could make it difficult for the January 31 GAERC to adopt a more relaxed position on Cuba as an "A" point (i.e., without substantive discussion.) Marion Kappeyne de Coppelio (MFA, Director Western Hemisphere Affairs), told poloff that "the Czechs are being unhelpful" by refusing to go along with consensus, complaining that "it is not a good thing for the EU." She confirmed that the Dutch want to maintain the consensus they thought they had from the last COLAT meeting under their presidency in December and use the draft conclusion as it now stands.

¶2. (C) Later the same morning at an official briefing to Australia, New Zealand and the USG on the GAERC, Derk Oldenburg (MFA, European Integration) confirmed that the Czechs were resisting the change in EU Cuba policy without giving specifics. He added that many in the Netherlands, himself included, opposed the change in principal but it seemed inevitable. His defense of the EU position was lackluster and he ruefully admitted to Poloff that the proposed GAERC conclusion lacked express caveats or benchmarks to measure improvements in Cuban behavior between now and the six month review deadline. This means, among other things, that there is no mention of releasing the remaining 64 prisoners whose arrest precipitated the "June measures." (This failure to be explicit seems to lie behind the Czech objections to the current draft; ref email.) Poloff urged the Dutch to fall in behind the Czechs and vote their conscience at the GAERC.

SOBEL